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# New Rochelle

## THROUGH SEVEN GENERATIONS



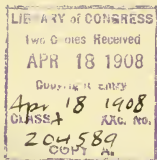
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# HUGUENOT MEMORIAL AT HUDSON PARK.

This stone is inscribed: "To commemorate the coming of the Huguenots. Erected by the Huguenot Association of New Rochelle and the Westchester County Historical Society, 1688—1898. The gift of Huguenot Descendants of New Rochelle.

New Rochelle  
was founded by  
French Huguenot Refugees  
in the year  
1688

n commemoration of  
that event this  
Historical Sketch  
is published in the year  
1908 and dedicated to  
the Citizens of the  
present City by the  
NATIONAL CITY BANK  
of New Rochelle







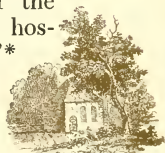
From an old print of the Boston Road (now Huguenot Street) showing the French Church.



Old-time residents of New Rochelle, and eager students of local history, discover that many pertinent facts are omitted from this little book, they will perhaps accept the author's excuse—that the work is intended to be nothing more than an *entrée*, not a banquet. In this modern city of fast-growing population old-time residents are relatively few, and those who were so ill-advised as to be “born and raised” elsewhere must be led by degrees to full and thorough appreciation of their early mistake and present good fortune. To such of our citizens we offer a fairly comprehensive story of New Rochelle in small compass—a taste of its interesting history.

Sixty years ago it was said that “New Rochelle at an early period was a place of some resort, not only for the acquirement of the French language, but on account of the hospitality and politeness of its inhabitants.”\*

\*Bolton's Guide to New Rochelle, 1842.



Old French Church.

More than two hundred years ago a gifted woman recorded her impressions of New Rochelle in these appreciative words: "On the 22nd of December we set out for New Rochelle, where being come we had good entertainment and recruited ourselves very well. This is a very pretty place, well compact, and good, handsome houses, clean, good and passable roads, and situated on a navigable river; abundance of land, well fenced and cleared all along as we passed, *which caused in me a love of the place which I could have been contented to live in.*"†

This early reputation for beauty, thrift and hospitality we believe is consistently maintained by the modern New Rochelle, and we may be glad to claim it as our inheritance.



Huguenot House on the old Lester farm, North Avenue, still standing.

†Madam Knight's Journal, 1704.



*Drake House. See page 31.*

Surrounded in Westchester County by Dutch and English settlements, New Rochelle came into existence as a distinctively French Community. Its founders were the sons and grandsons of those devoted Huguenots who in 1628 stubbornly resisted the attacks of the French army in the beleaguered city of La Rochelle until reduced from twenty-seven thousand to five thousand souls, and who surrendered in this extremity only upon promise of future liberty to practice their religion unmolested.

Fifty-three years after this famous siege of La Rochelle, when King Louis XIV caused the renewal of Huguenot persecutions by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, many citizens of La Rochelle fled to England. It was a body of these refugees who, about 1686, commissioned Governor Leisler of New York to purchase a tract of land for them in America.

The Governor bought from John Pell,

Esquire, for this purpose, 6,000 acres of land. This was part of a tract which had been purchased in 1640 from the Siwanoy Indians by the Dutch West India Company, transferred by this Company to Thomas Pell in 1654 and ceded to John Pell in 1669. At the time of the Huguenot purchase it was a part of Pelham Manor. In addition to the tract of 6,000 acres the purchasers received as a gift from \*Lord Pell one hundred acres for the church.

“The sum of sixteen hundred and seventy-five pounds and twenty-five shillings sterling, current silver money of this province” (about \$8,000.00) and “one fat calf on every four-and-twentieth day of June yearly and every year, forever if demanded” was the price for which Lord Pell, his heirs and assigns forever, quit claim to all of New Rochelle. As nearly as one can judge from records accessible a part of the tract was assigned to each family for cultivation in advance of payment to Lord Pell, for many later deeds from Pell to individual settlers describe the land transferred as a part of the 6,000 acres originally bargained for.

It is also on record that not only Lord Pell but his heirs “demanded” the fat calf on the appointed date for many years, and this date being the festival of St. John the Baptist the occasion was made a day of feasting and revelry.

\*A Provincial title, signifying not a Peer of Great Britain, but Lord of Pelham Manor.



*In Residence Park.*

There is evidence that farms were taken up by single families of Huguenots prior to the arrival from England of the main body of colonists. As the exact time of the latter's coming has been the subject of controversy it will be enlightening to publish here two letters written some years ago by Rev. Dr. Charles W. Baird to Mr. Henry M. Lester. Dr. Baird was an authority upon the Huguenot migration and Huguenot settlements in America. At the time of his death he had in preparation a history of the New Rochelle Colony, and there can be no doubt that his information was the result of more exhaustive research than any other writer has ever given to this subject.

RYE, N. Y., 12 Nov., 1883.

MY DEAR SIR:

My delay in replying to your note of the second November has been due to the fact that the inquiry it contained needed a closer examination than I could give it. I have now gone over the evidence on the subject, and have convinced myself that the year 1688 was the year of the formation of the Huguenot settlement of New Rochelle. Should you wish it, I could give you the leading points of that evidence: but it may suffice to say that there is positive proof of the existence of the settlement as early as September, 1688, and that I find no mention of it before that year, but on the contrary much to lead me to think that an earlier date is out of the question.

Believe me yours very sincerely,

CHARLES W. BAIRD.

HENRY M. LESTER, Esq.,  
628 Broadway, New York.



*Memorial Stone at Hudson Park.*



*View from Hudson Park.*

RYE, N. Y., 12 Dec., 1883.

MY DEAR MR. LESTER:

My principal reliance for the date of the settlement of New Rochelle is upon a statement that occurs in a letter of Dominic Henry Selyns of New York to the Classis of Amsterdam. Writing on the tenth of October, 1688, he mentions "Nova Rupella (New Rochelle), about five leagues from here," as "built up" or "being built up." I have been trying to get a copy of the original of Selyns' letter, which is quoted by Mr. Murphy in his *Anthology of New Netherland*. From the connection of the passage, I presume he meant that New Rochelle was then being built up. This would give the autumn of 1688 as the time of the settlement.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES W. BAIRD.

HENRY M. LESTER, Esq.,

New York.

On the rocky point now called Hudson Park, adding dignity and interest to one of the most picturesque pleasure-grounds along the Sound, stands a memorial stone said to mark the spot where the refugees landed.

It seems that about thirty families com-



*Davis House, Cooper's Corners.*



prised this colony of Huguenots. They immediately named the place New Rochelle in honor of their native city, and then apparently became too much engrossed with serious affairs to record the trivial incidents of daily life for the benefit of gossip-loving posterity. Very little is known of them at just this period, except that other Huguenots arrived from time to time in small numbers and that Dutch and English settlers occasionally joined the colony, so that by the year 1710 there was a total population of 261 persons, including 57 slaves.

Naturally, the affairs of the church occasioned the earliest literature relating to this colony of intensely religious people. They were exiled from home because of rebellion against the established church of France, but with entire freedom to worship as they pleased it developed that they did not all please to worship in one way; and the circumstance engendered some bitterness of feeling, at least among the clergy and officers of the church.

The fact that our colonists had sacrificed all their possessions in France and suffered exile for the sake of a principle, is evidence enough that they were men of strong character. That many of them were also highly educated and intelligent is apparent even in the meagre records which show how their public and private affairs were conducted.

But they were few in number and without means. They organized a church at once and erected a small wooden meeting-house in 1692, on the Boston Road—now Huguenot Street—near the present Episcopal Church. They could not maintain a regular pastor, but were administered to by visiting clergymen from the French settlement in New York City and by pastors of the English Church having charges in other parts of Westchester County. When they had no pastor at all they walked barefooted, shoes and stockings in hand, a distance of more than twenty miles to attend services at the French Church in New York.

Clergymen of the English Church in America were maintained largely by funds sent from England, and these were the earliest settled pastors of the New Rochelle Church.



*First Methodist Church. See page 30.*

It was inevitable that they should desire to conduct the service in conformity with that of the English Church, and in 1709 the Reverend Daniel Bondet, then pastor at New Rochelle, obtained the consent of a majority of the French congregation to adopt that form of worship. A minority, however, adhered to the original service of the French Reformed Church, and these established a second congregation.

It was this division that occasioned the more or less acrimonious correspondence of various successive pastors with their church superiors concerning the church at New Rochelle. Some legal controversy arose also over the hundred acres of land deeded to the church by Lord Pell.

Aside from this clerical correspondence we do not find evidence that the people were much disturbed by religious differences. They were industriously building homes and laying the foundation of a city in which churches of many denominations are to-day conspicuously numerous, prosperous, and harmonious. One has only to view the present beautiful Trinity Church on Huguenot Street and the equally imposing Presbyterian Church at the junction of Huguenot and Main Streets, to see that both the "original" congregations eventually thrived and left worthy successors.

The oldest inhabited part of New Rochelle is in the vicinity of these two churches. Huguenot Street—variously denominated Kings Road, High Street and the Boston Road in the early records—existed when the Huguenot colonists arrived here. There they built their church and most of the first dwelling-houses. “There is one dozen houses round the church near each other,” wrote one of the early chroniclers, “which gives the place the appearance of a town.”

When the New Rochelle tract was divided into farms in 1693, North Street was opened as a “division line.” At the first recorded “General meeting of all the inhabitants” held Dec. 2, 1699, Peter Frederick and Joseph Debane were named “for to be surveyors about the fences in all the plantations of this place for to preserve the place,” and at the next subsequent meeting, March 1, 1700, it was voted that “as for the Kings Road from York to Boston the assembly has confirmed it as it is now settled, being a chain broad, and for the Water Road the assembly has also confirmed it as it stands now from Boston Road to the Water side betwixt John Jeffries and the Widow Market, and this to be also a chain broad too, and for the other roads to the water side it is ordered that they shall stand as they are now settled, provided they be 18 foot broad.”



*Church of the Blessed Sacrament.*



*German Lutheran.*



*St. John's—Methodist.*



*Salem Baptist.*

NEW ROCHELLE CHURCHES.

The earliest roads to the water-side were the streets we know as Centre Avenue, Echo Avenue, Drake Avenue and Weyman Avenue, which appear to have been opened in the order named. Echo Avenue, first called Cedar Street, ran a tortuous course from the Boston Road along the creek, probably including all of the present Pelham Road to the intersection of Centre Avenue. Drake Avenue was Drake's Lane and is still so called by the older residents of New Rochelle. The present Weyman Avenue, then called Parcott's Lane, joined the road to Kingsbridge and New York by way of Eastchester.

A leisurely drive or walk through the various thoroughfares referred to will disclose some evidence still remaining of the compara-



*Old Pugsley House.*



*View on Davenport's Neck.*

tive antiquity of these portions of New Rochelle. Old buildings, bits of old fences, corners of orchards and "home lots," here and there exist; but they are rapidly disappearing, and a few years hence there will be little to recall the old French settlement. One may appreciate fully all the beauty that wealth and modern refinement lend to the present city, yet echo in his heart the impassioned words in which a descendant of one of the eminent Huguenot families deplored the destruction of the old stone church. "Alas," he says, "that this venerable relic of antiquity should now have to be numbered among the things that were! The changes incident to the lapse of years and the vandalism of progress—or shall I say the progress of vandalism—have so completely annihilated every vestige of the ancient structure that even its exact situation is more or less a matter of conjecture. \* \* \* \* \*

And why could not the grasping, all-absorb-

ing spirit of change and novelty which characterizes the age have spared us this one humble monument of the past to build which it is said that the men carried stones in their hands and the women mortar in their aprons."

To see what landmarks do remain, suppose we drive through some of the old streets of New Rochelle, starting westward from the corner of Huguenot and Mechanic Streets.

Immediately we are at Trinity Church, itself a beautiful, modern structure, but descended lineally from the old stone church just referred to. Some chroniclers assert that beneath the busy highway where your vehicle stops the remains of the earlier pastors of the church lie buried; others dispute this, and you may choose between a conflict of testimony offered without satisfactory proof on either side. At the west side and back of the church are graves: some marked by stones bearing recent dates, others old as the town itself, many with names and inscriptions obliterated by the passage of time.

Across the deep chasm through which the railroad trains are incessantly rushing, flashing and rumbling, are more of these ancient stones, and you note again the "vandalism of progress" which could not allow the old Huguenots to preserve in death the peace they loved so well in life, but must cut in two their quiet rest-





*Trinity Churchyard and Old Huguenot Cemetery.*

ing-place and make of it such a thundering, quaking region of everlasting torment as they never expected or deserved to inhabit.

Across the way from Trinity Church you notice a commodious and comfortable-looking old dwelling-house, painted white and in very good repair. Only two or three years ago a row of enormous old trees stood before the spacious grounds of this "mansion," but to-



*Carpenter House on Huguenot Street.*

day its broad veranda looks upon the kitchen windows of smart, modern apartments for which the trees of a hundred years' growth had to make way. This is not one of the old landmarks of French New Rochelle, but as a former dwelling of one of the Astor families it recalls the intermediate period when New Rochelle was still a stage-coach journey from the metropolis and the Summer home of many distinguished personages.

A little further on, midway between Centre Avenue and the Presbyterian Church, stands a quaint little house almost wholly obscured by trees, lilacs and thick-growing shrubs. Since pre-Revolutionary times this has been known as the Carpenter House, the home of a family long eminent and deservedly honored in New Rochelle.

A short way beyond the Carpenter House,

close to the street, stands a two-story shingled building in which the congregation of the Presbyterian Church met for many years prior to 1860. It was then moved to its present site to make room for the new church at your left.

This handsome stone edifice may be called a monument to the "dissenting" French congregation referred to in the earlier pages. It became a regularly organized Presbyterian Church in 1812.

You are now at the junction of Huguenot and Main Streets, beside the Soldiers' Monument. At your left the beautiful winding thoroughfare called Pintard Avenue intersects with Main Street, and well back from the street, with an approach lined by aged trees, stands a well-preserved house originally occupied by



*Pintard House.*

Lewis Pintard, an illustrious New York merchant, who lived in New Rochelle in the early part of the last century.

As you continue west on Main Street bear in mind that you are still traversing the old Boston Road. About the corner of Drake's Lane (now Drake Avenue) are clustered a number of small buildings apparently belonging to the old order of things, but none of historical importance.

Between Drake and Weyman Avenues, close to the walk on your left is an old square house, half masonry, where a former citizen of New Rochelle, Thomas Ronalds, used frequently to entertain his distinguished brother Peter, United States Minister to France. The house and its environs are somewhat changed. One domiciled here at the present day might imagine himself minister to Italy.

A little beyond the Ronalds house the old road turns to the right and proceeds through Eastchester and Kingsbridge to New York, while Main Street lies straight before you, leading to the same destination by way of Mt. Vernon.

You may now drive across to Pelham Road—the “water side” of the old documents—through either Drake or Weyman Avenues. There is nothing of oldest New Rochelle on either of these thoroughfares, though several imposing places on Drake Avenue, in melan-



choly process of decay, attest the stately appearance of this old "lane" some two generations ago.

Turning east on Pelham Road you see an attractive-looking old house, long and low, with veranda extending across the entire front and shaded by a single tree of venerable age. This house was built before the Revolution and is said to have been occupied at intervals during the war by British officers.

Following the course of Pelham Road as it merges into Cedar Road, and finally into Echo Avenue, you find yourself on Main Street again, beyond the eastern boundary of the business section. At this corner, near the present Beacon Hall apartments, stood, until recently, the old residence of Vicount d'Allaire, a distinguished French nobleman who made New Ro-

chelle his adopted home at the time of the Huguenot settlement.

Driving down Main Street to Rose and turning northward you arrive at Huguenot and North Streets. Here stands intact, though changed in appearance by a latter-day superstructure, an old roadside inn built before 1711, and kept by Captain Besley, a justice of the peace and man of many activities in the first generation of New Rochelle's existence. The old Boston stages changed horses here, and it is said to have been the stopping place of the flying messenger who carried from Boston to New York the news of the Battle of Lexington.

Proceeding across the railroad bridge and out North Avenue perhaps half a mile, you notice at the right, close to the walk, a little



*Old Allaire House.*



*Old "Berpo" House on North Avenue.*

whitewashed stone house so out of place and lonely in its wizened old age that passersby stop and examine it curiously. Legend says only that a Frenchman named Berpo lived here in the dim and distant past. It might not be a wild guess that "Berpo" became a vulgar contraction of Bonrepos, and that the little house really sheltered the one-time honored pastor of the old French Church.

Driving further on to the region now in process of development by the real estate companies, and directly in front of one of the most sightly tracts, you are faced by a bronze bust and pedestal erected to the memory of Thomas Paine. Recalling Paine's great services in exciting and spreading the spirit of independence among the American people before the Revo-



lution, his intimate association with the greatest men of that day, his later assaults upon the Christian faith and the fierce denunciations heaped upon him by its defenders—knowing something of the man's splendid genius and instability, his reputation and notoriety—you are interested in what evidence now remains of his connection with New Rochelle.

The property before you is the old Paine Farm, confiscated by the Government because of the original owner's adherence to the British cause in the war of the Revolution, and presented to Paine in recognition of his patriotic services. Alone and in straightened circumstances the broken old man lived here a few years, cared for by an old negro housekeeper. A short time before his death in 1809 he removed to New York City, but his remains were



*The Thomas Paine House.*





brought to New Rochelle and buried on this property near the site of the present monument. There is a well-authenticated story of their surreptitious removal from this resting-place. Some women of the neighborhood, it is related, saw a wagon driven up to the gate and the occupants alight carrying spades with which they began digging about the grave. The women ran to the house of Constable Seacord and excitedly told him what they had seen. When the Constable reached the place the grave was empty and the strangers gone. It is said that the body was transported to England, but the mystery of its final disposition was never revealed.

Drive up the long avenue that was but re-

cently an old-fashioned country lane, and over the crest of the hill you come upon a weather-beaten little house set in a small garden-plot with all that remains of its old orchard of apples and pears. This was Thomas Paine's dwelling-place. A half-constructed modern residence has its elbow planted in the ribs of the old house now, and probably before these lines are printed this ancient structure, like nearly all of New Rochelle's interesting landmarks, will have been elbowed off the earth.

Returning to North Avenue and driving on past the Country Club grounds you pass a little stone church of decidedly modern appearance in noticeable contrast to the old cemetery beside it. This is the North Avenue Methodist Church, whose former meeting-house—illustrated on page 14—was the first of that persuasion in New Rochelle, and sheltered the third religious congregation established in the village.

Just beyond, at the corner of North Street and Quaker Ridge Road is a pleasant old house of pre-Revolutionary times, now occupied by Mr. Niehaus, the artist.

A short drive further on you come to the old Davis House, pictured on page 12. Mr. George Davis states that this was an old house when it was purchased by his grandfather in 1794.

You have now reached Cooper's Corners,

the end of this Huguenot thoroughfare. Drive back through North Avenue, past "Mahlstedt's Pond," and at the south side of the ice-houses you will see the beginning of an old and little traveled road. This in earlier days was a lane leading from North Avenue to Eastchester Road. Around the bend as you turn into this cross-road is one of the most ancient and picturesque of all the old homesteads now remaining. It is the Drake House, pictured on pages 7 and 47.

Continue along this road and stop a moment before the Coutant Cemetery—a very old burying-ground where rest the first of this honored New Rochelle family together with a long line of descendants and connections. The original Coutant homestead, where peculiarly barbarous depredations were committed during the Revolution because of its isolated situation, was doubtless near this burying-ground, though its exact location is uncertain.



*Coutant Cemetery.*



*Old Inn. See page 26.*

You have seen most of the places that can now be identified with the earliest years of New Rochelle. Here and there along your route you have noticed old homesteads evidently dating back several generations and with unmistakable suggestions of old-time comfort and wealth (as wealth was measured then) in their generous proportions, pleasing architecture, and spacious grounds. Very few of them are occupied by descendants of the original owners, and many have been left to decay in neighborhoods now distinctly "unfashionable."

In 1712 our polite and hospitable inhabitants numbered 304. In seventy-eight years—down to the first National Census in 1790—we had attained a population of 692. Ten years later, 1274. In 1840 we were 1816 strong. In 1850—one hundred and sixty-two years after the Huguenot landing—the population of New Rochelle was 2547 souls.

This very moderate advance through the better part of two centuries would imply what diligent searching of records proves to be the fact. New Rochelle remained always a steady-going, industrious and eminently respectable community. From 1699, until we enter that momentous period preceding the Revolution, there is no indication of any disturbance in her placid existence.

In 1701 the town records specify that the annual assembly was held for the nomination of officers "according to the use of this County," our French-speaking colony conforming to the customs of their adopted land. Isaye Vallau, senior, Robert Bloomer, and Oliver Besly were named "Townsmen, for to look after and manage the prudential affairs of the place."



*Huguenot House, Recently Standing on North Avenue.*

In the same year we find recorded a receipt made by Lord Pell in the good old comprehensive phraseology. It bears a date ten years prior to the date of entry. "November the 21, 1691, then received full satisfaction, as well for all payments of land accounts as for all others, from Doctor John Neufuille of New Rochelle; I say received in full of all demands from said Dr. Neufuille from the beginning of the world till this day, by me—John Pell."

In that year (1701) Ambrose Sicard made his "Last will concerning the little it has pleased God to give me," and John Martin desired his wife Anne Martin "to have my body buried with decent simplicity." As they lived in the world so they would pass out of it.

In 1702 the townsmen and part of the inhabitants examined the book of records kept



*An Old-Time Residence on Beauchamp Place.*



*Flandreaux House, on Premium Point Road.*

by Isaac Bertrand Dutuffeaux, found that "from folio two to folio twenty-three the book is full and without any cross or defectuosity," placed the book in the hands of Paul Bignoux, and thanked said Dutuffeaux for his administration. A faithful officer satisfactorily paid with thanks and commendation.

In 1708 it is noted that "after next Christmas the hogs shall no longer be allowed outside the plantations." A severe restriction but relaxed after a short trial; subsequent records repeat for many years the provision that hogs may run "in the commons" if provided with rings in their noses; horses, too, if shackled, but not sheep under any conditions.

The fence viewer was admonished each year to see that all fences were of proper

strength and regulation height, and as the height was frequently subject to compulsory change the relations of the fence viewers and inhabitants should have been a beautiful object-lesson in "politeness and hospitality."

Frequent entries record the "ear-marks" adopted by various cattle owners. Thus:—"To-day, May 12, 1726, Mr. Cesar has given the marks of his stock, which are a slit on each ear and on the right ear a spot."

In 1719 a Bridge Tender was appointed to take toll—for each horse 6 cents, each horned animal 6 cents, and for sheep "a price according to the amount they will shake the bridge." The bridge referred to was probably on the Boston Road crossing the creek near the present site of Stephenson Park.

In 1720 the assembly voted Mr. Allaire a salary for keeping the records:—20 shillings per year.

In 1759, and each year thereafter, highway overseers were elected for the "Upper Quarter" as well as for the "low part" of New Rochelle, indicating a growing population northward.

So these chronicles of small events continue to 1776. In the year that the Declaration of Independence was signed, they ceased abruptly.

In 1783 they are resumed. We have then the first meeting under the new régime. It





*Entrance to Lyncroft, Formerly the Paine Farm.*



*Linden Place.*

was no longer an "Assembly of All the People" but a "Town Meeting held for the regulation of said town and carrying into execution the Law of the STATE." It was held at the house of Gilbert Brush, "Innkeeper," in pursuance of an ordinance of the Council appointed by the Act of Legislature entitled: "*An Act to provide for the temporary government of the southern part of this state whenever the enemy shall abandon or be dispossessed of the same and until the legislature can be convened.*"

Here, of course, is the explanation of the temporary cessation of records:

In the Summer of 1776, Washington and the Continental Army were forced to retreat from New York and Long Island to White Plains, leaving Howe's forces in control of the City. The whole of Westchester County lying between the two armies became thenceforth disputed territory (or "Neutral Ground"). Occupied permanently by neither British nor Americans, it was the foraging and skirmishing ground for the worst elements of both armies.

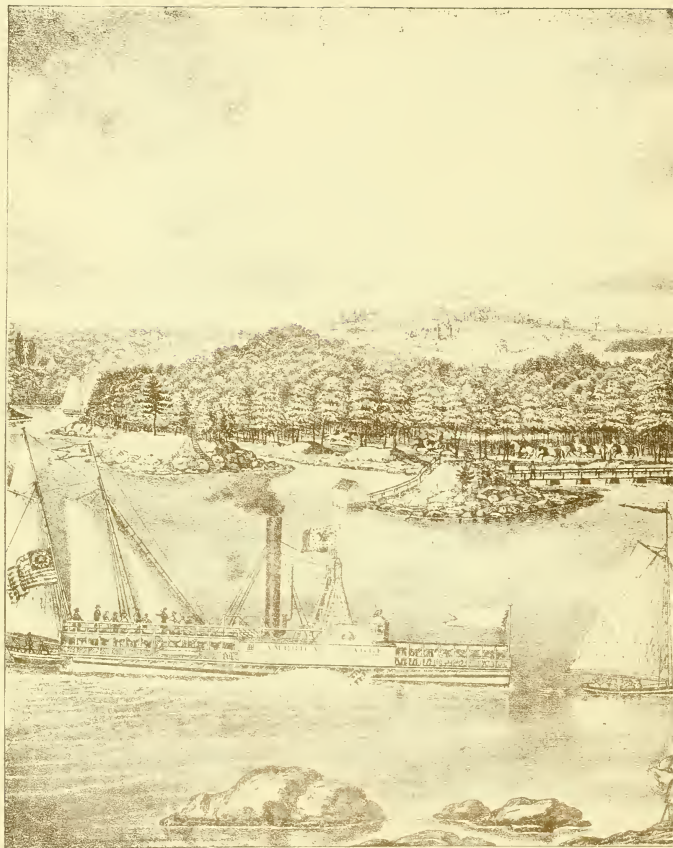
It was in October, 1776, that General Howe, in pursuit of Washington, united his forces at the point now called Pelham Neck and marched toward New Rochelle. Here he was joined by General von Knyphausen with a



*On Pintard Avenue.*



*Locust Avenue.*





body of Hessians and part of a regiment of Irish Cavalry. Skirmishes between parts of Washington's army and the British forces occurred in the vicinity of New Rochelle, but no important engagement took place until the main armies met at White Plains in the battle of October 25.

During the remainder of the war our village saw little of the "pomp and circumstance" attending it, but of its meanness and lawlessness they saw enough. The "Cowboys," a regularly organized band of marauders attending the British army, and the "Skinners," an equally choice company of freebooters, identified with the American forces, plundered and pillaged throughout the county with cheerful impartiality. Many of New Rochelle's inhabitants were doubtless despoiled of all they possessed. Family names appearing in the records of earlier days now drop out. The churches were closed, local government suspended; our polite and orderly community merely existed, a powerless victim of circumstances, ground between the upper and the nether millstone.

During this period Admiral Howe was advised by his superiors in England that—

"As the County of Westchester is in a very unsettled condition and our troops are much harassed by the Rebels, whenever in that vicinity, you will *send a couple of frigates up the Bronx River* to protect our forces and fire into the enemy whenever seen."





*National City Bank and Masonic Temple.*

As every disaster came to New Rochelle except damage from the fire of the Bronx fleet, it is believed that the Admiral disobeyed orders and kept his frigates out of that purling trout brook.

For three generations prior to the Revolution the official records of the old settlement are as regular and peaceful as the ticking of grandfather's clock; and after seven years of silence the ticking goes on in much the same reposeful way.

A smaller proportion of French names appear in the subsequent records, though many of the oldest remain throughout the town's history. At the first Town Meeting, in 1773, these officers were elected:

James Willis, Town Clerk.

James Ronalds, Constable and Collector.

Benjamin Stephenson, Supervisor.

David Guion and James Willis, Overseers of Roads for the Upper Quarter.



*Main Street.*





*Wykagyl Country Club.*

Abram Guion and Isaiah Guion, Overseers of Roads for the Lower Quarter.

Peter Flandreaux and Elias Guion, Damage Viewers.

Stephenson, Ronalds and Willis, Assessors.

In the town records year by year one may see between the lines some reflection of events in the larger world. For example, the distressing financial conditions prevalent throughout the country after the war closed are faithfully indicated in the provision made by this little village for the poor fund. From less than \$200.00 per year the sum appropriated rose gradually to \$800.00, dropping back to smaller amounts with the slow return of general prosperity.

The rising sentiment against slavery is faintly indicated in these quiet pages, as in 1789 when the overseers and Justices of the Peace "certify that Plato, a negro, and Cate, a negro woman, late the property of James

Pugsley of the said town of New Rochelle, is of sufficient ability of body to provide for themselves and under the age of fifty years, agreeable to a certain clause of an act of the State of New York, passed at the last meeting of the late session.”

The town meetings were long held at the citizens' houses, but a slight beginning was made in the direction of public housing facilities by a vote, passed in 1802, authorizing the town clerk “to provide a chest or trunk for the purpose of keeping the town books in.”

At a little later date (1815) commissioners were authorized to petition the legislature for proper authority to receive an amount of money left by Wm. Henderson for building a town house. In 1824 suit was begun against the executors of Wm. Henderson's estate to



*The First City Hall.*



*Drake House and Grounds. See page 31.*

secure this legacy. Three years later the money was paid, and the first Town House was built soon after on the site occupied by the present City Hall at Main and Mechanic Streets. The old building was moved a block eastward and is now a weather-beaten relic, facing Lawton Street a few steps from Main Street.

A little book called "A Guide to New Rochelle" was published by Mr. Robert Bolton in 1842. The date has something of a modern look until we subtract the figures from 1908 and find that the intervening years make two-thirds of a century. Looking over the pages of the "guide" then, we are scarcely surprised to find that it is not exactly a guide to the New Rochelle we are living in to-day. The difference is fairly indicated in the picture that we have reproduced from Mr. Bolton's hand-book. A complete full-size reproduction would have included the following legend:

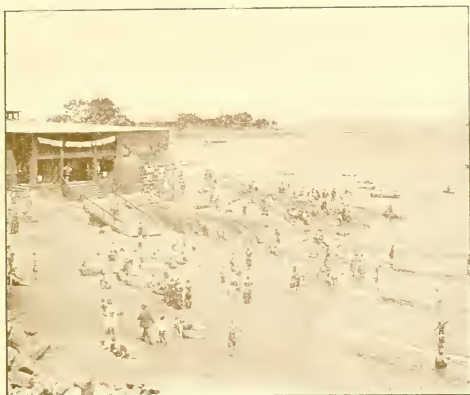
"This splendid establishment is delightfully situated on Long Island Sound, about a mile from the Village of New Rochelle and eighteen miles from New York. In point of salubrity and picturesque scenery it is not surpassed by any in America. The accommodations are of the most excellent description; warm and cold salt and fresh water baths ready at all times; and nothing is spared to promote the amusement and comfort of the inmates. Pleasure and fishing boats for aquatic excursions, and vehicles and horses for driving or riding provided at a moment's notice. The Steam Boat American Eagle leaves New Rochelle early every morning and the foot of Fulton Street, East River, every afternoon, landing at the dock. The Harlem Railroad cars will convey passengers to Fordham from whence stages run twice a day to New Rochelle.

July 1st, 1842.

C. F. RICE."

Where this flourishing hotel stood we now have the beautiful wooded park presented to the city a few years ago by Mr. Iselin. The store of Mr. Rice is a thing of the past. So are the anglers in skirts and beaver hats; so are the big farms stretching back to the village, then a mile away, now reaching to the water-side. The wagons, carriages and expectant people at the wharf awaiting the landing of the "American Eagle" indicate that here was the chief point of communication with the outside world, and the New York steamer making one trip daily each way the readiest means of access to the great metropolis where so large a part of male New Rochelle now earns its daily bread. The old flag, with its twenty-six stars, is itself hopelessly out of date.

"The advantages presented by the proximity of the Sound," says Bolton's Guide, "are



*Beach at Hudson Park.*



*New Rochelle Rowing Club.*

of great importance to the Town. Besides the shipping of various market produce on board the sloops, there is the convenience of a daily steamboat to the city during the Summer months and three times a week in the Winter. By this means quantities of produce are sent to the New York markets at reasonable rates. There are several hotels which afford excellent accommodation to parties visiting New Rochelle for the amusement of fishing, the salubrity of its air, or the beauty of its scenery.

“The Le Roy House, in the town of New Rochelle, is an excellent and comfortable establishment, well suited for those who prefer the small stir of a village, while they are not too far removed from the banks of the Sound.

“There are also two other excellent hotels in the village, well managed—the Mansion House and New Rochelle Hotel.”

In passing, it may be noted that the hotel referred to as the Le Roy House was at a still earlier date the home of Herman Otis Le Roy, and not improbably the scene of Daniel Web-





*Boechmont.*



*Elm Street.*

ster's courtship of Catherine Le Roy, who became the great statesman's second wife and who lived in New Rochelle at the old home for many years after Webster's death. The house stood in large grounds, well back from Main Street, at the corner of Centre Avenue.

The Mansion House was a commodious and popular hotel on the northwest corner of Centre Avenue and Main Street, with an extensive garden running back to Huguenot Street. Its large ballroom was the scene of many brilliant social events, and the daily stages from Fordham brought to its doors many gay parties of Summer resorters and distinguished visitors. A part of the old house still remains, partially obscured by small stores erected in front of it.

The New Rochelle Hotel stood on the north side of Main Street, about midway between Centre Avenue and Mechanic Street; a comfortable old hostelry with a double-deck veranda extending across the entire front.

The advent of the railroad, which ran its first train through New Rochelle on Christmas day, 1848, foreshadowed changed conditions which were to accelerate the growth of the village, but without effecting any sudden or radical change in its general characteristics.

Westchester County has been a favorite region for the Summer homes and large estates of eminent families from early Colonial days;





*The Present City Hall.*



*The New Rochelle Hospital.*

and New Rochelle, possessing the advantage of a shore location not too remote from the city, had drawn much of its slowly increasing population from the same cultured and well-to-do classes of merchants and professional men who were settled in other parts of the county.

Improved railroad service brought more and more people of this character; their Summer residences became permanent homes; after a time men of similar tastes with more restricted incomes found that they, too, might establish homes in this favored region, and these came in still greater numbers to swell the population of New Rochelle.

It is not necessary to record the details of this development which has now made of the old village a city of more than twenty thousand



*Old School House at Cooper's Corners.*



*NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.*

souls. The story is told impressively in the miles of beautiful streets that now intersect all the old Huguenot farms, in substantial public buildings, in thousands of tastefully ornate dwellings. The pictures of modern New Rochelle distributed through these pages are more significant than words.

Perhaps the churches of any community afford the best visible indication of its moral tone; the hospitals and charitable organizations are a fair index of its humanitarian standards; the schools supply the measure of its general intelligence and civilization. One who knows these institutions as they exist in New Rochelle need not fear to have his city judged by their character and efficiency.

The city has numerous if not aggressively prominent industries; its mercantile houses are substantially prosperous, it contains within itself all the features of an independent, self-sustaining municipality. Its financial institutions may be specially mentioned to illustrate this fact. The National City Bank—whose charter and that of the present city date from the same year—the New Rochelle Trust Company and the People's Bank for Savings are firmly established and ably conducted organizations competing successfully with the best of their metropolitan contemporaries.

When the National City Bank opened its



*NEW ROCHELLE CHURCHES.*

new building a short time ago, the visitors who came to inspect its banking rooms and safe deposit vaults equalled in number one-fourth of the city's adult population—a circumstance that agreeably indicates the survival here of that “friendship in business” which it seems can still exist though the business be modern and progressive.

But, creditable as its commercial institutions undoubtedly are, New Rochelle is not and does not aspire to be a typical “hustling” American city. Belching chimneys, a murky landscape and a babel of business are not among her distinguishing features. She offers a clean atmosphere, physically and morally healthful, and a congenial environment where the home is the center of attraction, and the means for making the most of life are as varied as differing tastes demand.

It has seemed best to devote most of our descriptive pages to the earlier days because they have stamped New Rochelle with *character*. It is the prestige and dignity of early associations, the mellow beauty of age, not less than the glory of flanking hills and flashing waters that beckon to New Rochelle and cause old residents and new ones alike to echo in slightly changed words the thought of Madam Knight—*They cause in me a love of the place which I am contented to live in.*



*NATIONAL CITY BANK.*  
*Vaults, Offices and Reception Rooms.*

*Family Names of French Huguenots Who are Known  
to have Settled in New Rochelle at Various  
Periods Between 1688 and 1750.*

Abbé	Dansler	Jabouin	Parcot
Allaire	Das	Jamain	Pelletreau
Allee	Deane	Juire	Pemot
Angevin	De Bane	Juin	Perot
Antoine	De Blez		Pintard
Arneaux	De Bonrepos	Kearney	
Arquez	de Ste. Croix		Quaintain
	De Veaux		
Badeau	Douty	La Dore	Ravaux
Baignous	Du Bois	Ladou	Renoud
Ballet	Dutuffeaux	Lambert	Requa
Barheit		Lamoureux	Reynaud
Barteau	Erouard	Landrin	Rhinelandor
Bartain		Lauvan	Riche
Bayeux		Lavigne	Rivasson
Berdy	Faneuil	Le Conte	Roubet
Bertin	Feru	Le Fevre	
Berjeau	Flandreaux	Le Jeune	Schureman
Besley	Florance	Le Mestre	Sicard
Bolt	Forrestier	Le Roux	Simon
Bondet	Foulon	Lespinar	Soulice
Bonnefoy	Fountain	L'Estrange	Stoupee
Bonnet	Frederick	Le Villaine	Stuckey
Bonnin	Fuille	Lieure	Suize
Boutillier			
Bouyer	Gallaudet	Mabe	Tebard
Bougrand	Garnaud	Machet	Tek
Bould	Gaynard	Magnon	Thannet
Bouquet	Gillet	Mambru	Thauvet
Bouteman	Gilliot	Manho	Theroulde
Breton	Giraud	Martin	Timon
	Gombaud	Mercier	Torn
Carré	Gougeon	Mesnard	Toulon
Caillard	Guerin	Moreau	Trehel
Cautier	Guion	Mott	
Chadaine	Guerinaut	Moulineaux	
Chaperon			Vallade
Clement			Valleau
Conet	Hastier	Naudin	Vergeraud
Cothonneau	Honorez	Neufville	Villeponteux
Coutant	Houdin	Nicolle	Vincent





*Huguenot Memorial Window in the First Presbyterian Church.*

# *The National City Bank*

OF NEW ROCHELLE

*Officers and Directors*

1908

HENRY M. LESTER, PRESIDENT

JOSEPH T. BROWN, VICE-PRESIDENT

GEORGE F. FLANDREAUX, CASHIER

GEORGE W. LIPPINCOTT, ASS'T CASHIER

JOHN G. AGAR

HENRY M. LESTER

JOSEPH T. BROWN

CLARENCE S. McCLELLAN

ROBERT C. FISHER

CHARLES PRYER

GEORGE F. FLANDREAUX

HENRY A. SIEBRECHT

JOHN F. LAMBDEN

GEORGE A. SUTER

HOWARD R. WARE

To Mr. Charles Pryer's "The Neutral Ground" and "Reminiscences of an Old Westchester Homestead," and to Mr. Pryer in person, the author is indebted for much valuable assistance.

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For facts and legends which could not be incorporated in this brief sketch, the reader is referred to Mr. Pryer's books—published by Putnam's—and to Rev. Robert Bolton's *History of Westchester County*, and *A Guide to New Rochelle*, both of which are available at the New Rochelle Public Library.

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